

A New "Excelsior."

It was about half-past seven o'clock in the evening when a youth created something of a sensation by passing through an Alpine village, in a driving snow-storm, carrying a banner, upon which was inscribed the strange device, "Excelsior." His brow was sad, but his eye (according to all accounts he had but one eye) flashed like a falchion from its sheath, while he pushed on, looking neither to the right nor the left, but not forgetting to call loudly, "Excelsior!" At first the villagers thought he had been drinking, and a policeman was started on his track; but, finding there was nothing disorderly about the boy's conduct he was permitted to go his way unmolested. In happy homes the young fellow saw the light of household fires gleam warm and cheery, although coal was away up out of the houses, as it always is in cold weather; above, the spectral glaciers shone, and from his lips escaped a sigh that was heard all over town, to this effect, "Excelsior!"

"Try not the pass," the old man said; "I've lived here for ninety years; I'm the oldest inhabitant, an' I never saw the signs more favorable for a big storm. Besides, the roarin' torrent is deep and wide, an' if you get across you can't get back for a week, unless you go around by Rabbit-hash, an' cross on the bridge. Take my advice, young feller an' stop over night; you'll find the Washington right over the way, the cheapest house in town. Shall I take your baggage?" The boy turned up the other street, indicating that he intended to climb the hill on the west side of the town.

"Oh, stay," the gentle maiden said, "and rest your weary head upon this breast." And right here the conduct of the young man became inexplicable. He did not accept the maiden's invitation, although she was comely, about 16 years of age, and evidently belonged to the best society. He simply said that he was in a hurry, and would probably stop the next time he was in town. The maiden passed into the house, slammed the door, and remarked to her mother that if she ever offered to assist a man in distress again she hoped she might be blessed. The young lady is quite indignant, indeed.

"Beware the pine tree's withered branch! beware the

"Oh, give us a rest!" screamed the boy, who was getting out of patience, and the well-meaning peasant retired without completing the warning, which was, no doubt, something about "the awful avalanche."

At break of day, as heavenward the pious monks of St. Bernard uttered the oft-repeated prayer, they were startled, nay, shocked, to hear a young man shouting "Excelsior!" and cursing the country black and blue for being the roughest, coldest and most forbidding of any he had seen since he left New Jersey. "How far is it to the next village?" he asked, "for I have something here that will knock the socks off of anything in this country." With that he passed on, still grasping in his hand of ice that banner with the strange device, while in the other he carried a little tin box labeled "Excelsior Corn and Bunion Eradicator."—*Oil City Derrick*.

The Wife of Henry Clay.

If the biography of a great man always revealed the truth, it would frequently be found that his wife played an important, though an obscure part in his life's drama. An article in the Lexington (Ky.) Transcript lifts the curtain from Henry Clay's domestic life, so far as to show his wife taking care of his family while the great statesman was looking after the nation.

What Ashland would have been but for Mrs. Clay it would be hard to tell; for her husband was at the capital of the nation more than half his time. She attended to everything, including five sons, who, according to their old teacher, Amos Kendall, were not the meekest of the lambs that gambolled at Ashland.

She managed the farm, with its crops and live stock, her household affairs, a large family of children, and two new negro servants, so as to assist largely in keeping up Mr. Clay's fortune, which was constantly subjected to heavy drains.

She often packed the finest of her vegetables with her own hands, and sent them, with butter, milk, and fruit, regularly to the market to be sold.

She often said, "My children laugh at me for selling such things, but they never object to the money I get for

them."

Her treatment of her slaves will be judged from her custom of rewarding them at the close of the week in proportion to their industry and good conduct. Saturday evening at Ashland, with the "darkies," was synonymous with Mrs. Clay's business-table covered with little piles of silver money.

The wife of the "great commoner" cared nothing for general and fashionable society, and it was fortunate, under the circumstances, that she did not.

The Ice Bridge at Niagara.

(From the *Toronto Globe*.)

For some days past an unusually large quantity of ice for so early in the season has been passing over the falls. The mill machinery both above and below the falls has been greatly interfered with, some of the races and wheels being completely blocked up. The great "jam" culminated on Saturday night and Sunday last in the formation of the finest ice bridge just below the great cataract that has been seen for many years. The ice is no doubt in many places forty to fifty feet deep. The jam is so complete below the falls that far down the river, the water on Monday was observed to be some eight or nine feet below the ordinary level. On the afternoon of Saturday last, the ice had jammed to such an extent at the head of Goat island that there was not a particle of water running between Goat island and the first of the "Three Sisters," a place where there is usually a very swift, deep current. A party of sightseers walked along the bed of the river at this point from the bridge crossing over to the small island, up to the head of Goat island. If the ice above had given way just at this time the party might have gone dashing among the mounds of ice into the roaring abyss a short distance below. The ice scenery on Goat island is very beautiful. The trees near the Horseshoe fall are bending and breaking under the loads of crystal. The ice mounds in front of the American fall are already nearly their usual height, while every sprig and bamble in the south-westerly part of Prospect park is drooping with its icy burden. It is quite unusual for the ice scenery to be so perfect here at this season of the year, and it is particularly observable just now, as the early part of the winter was so mild.

"Twenty years ago," said the passenger with the red ribbon in his button-hole, "I knew that man whom you saw get off at the last station. He was a young man of rare promise, a college graduate, a young man of brilliant intellect and shrewd commercial ability. He had some money when he left college. He invested it in business, and his business prospered. He married a beautiful young girl who bore him three lovely children—"

The red ribbon passenger, sitting on the wood box, "All at one time?"

"The red ribbon passenger: "No, in biennial installments of one. No one dreamed that the poor house would be their home. But in the evil hour the young man yielded to the tempter. He began to drink beer. He liked it and drank more. He drank and encouraged others to drink. That was only fourteen years ago, and he was a prosperous, wealthy man. To-day where is he?"

The clergyman in the front seat, solemnly: "A sot and a beggar."

The red ribbon man, disconsolately: "Oh, no; he is a member of Congress, and owns a brewery worth \$50,000."

"Sometimes it will happen this way.—*Burlington Hawkeye*.

'She Hath Done What She Could.'

Men and women, standing in their place, doing their work, trusting in God's love and help, grow deeper, soar higher, spread more widely as the years pass. They do not, perhaps, pass for saints, for they do not extraordinary things. They do not retire into convents to pass days in prayer. But every one comes to honor and love them more and more; men come to learn of their strength, take counsel of their experience; they spread light and peace around them, day by day, and so cause the Kingdom of God to come more and more simply by doing what they can. Whatever we do what we can, we immediately can do more. Like those who are ascending a mountain, each step so insignificant in itself, carries them on and, in still new scenes open before them. They have only to keep walking on, taking one step at a time, and presently they find themselves rising above the region of forests, begin to get glimpses of blue lakes lying below them, of sister peaks rising above them, of the great snow-covered fields which pour upward pure and cold, into the thickening air; they see the distant ocean, spotted with white sails, the forest rolling its sea of verdure far away up to the pale horizon. So, as we keep doing what we can, steadily, constantly, life opens before us. Heaven opens above us, the world comes around us, rich, varied, beautiful, and we find ourselves on great eminences of thought and love, hardly knowing how we came there, for we have been only doing what we could all the time—no more, no less.

J. F. Cidekens
Temperance Lecture on the Rail.

"Twenty years ago," said the passenger with the red ribbon in his button-hole, "I knew that man whom you saw get off at the last station. He was a young man of rare promise, a college graduate, a young man of brilliant intellect and shrewd commercial ability. He had some money when he left college. He invested it in business, and his business prospered. He married a beautiful young girl who bore him three lovely children—"

The red ribbon passenger, sitting on the wood box, "All at one time?"

"The red ribbon passenger: "No, in biennial installments of one. No one dreamed that the poor house would be their home. But in the evil hour the young man yielded to the tempter. He began to drink beer. He liked it and drank more. He drank and encouraged others to drink. That was only fourteen years ago, and he was a prosperous, wealthy man. To-day where is he?"

The clergyman in the front seat, solemnly: "A sot and a beggar."

The red ribbon man, disconsolately: "Oh, no; he is a member of Congress, and owns a brewery worth \$50,000."

"Sometimes it will happen this way.—*Burlington Hawkeye*.

Fretting.

One fretter can destroy the peace of a family, can disturb the harmony of a neighborhood, can unsettle the councils of cities and hinder the legislation of nations. He who frets is never the one who mends, who heals, who repairs evil; more, he discourages, enfeebles, and too often disables those around him, who but for the gloom and depression of his company, would do good work and keep up brave cheer. The effect upon a sensitive person of the mere neighborhood of a fretter is indescribable. It is to the soul what a cold, icy mist is to the body—more chilling than the bitterest storm. And when the fretter is one who is beloved, whose nearness of relation to us makes his fretting at the weather seem like a personal reproach to us, then the misery of it becomes indeed insupportable. Most men call fretting a minor fault—a foible, and not a vice. There is no vice except drunkenness which can so utterly destroy the peace and happiness of a home.

A Good Old Story.

A genuine Yankee in San Francisco having bored a new-comer with every conceivable question relative to his object in visiting the gold country, his hopes, his means and his prospects, at length asked him if he had a family. "Yes, sir; I have a wife and six children, and I never saw one of them." After this reply the couple sat a few minutes in silence; then the interrogator again commenced: "Was you ever blind, sir?" "No, sir." "Did you marry a widow, sir?" "No, sir." Another interval of silence. "Did I understand you to say, sir, that you had a wife and six children living in New York, and had never seen

one of them?" "Yes, sir, I so stated it. Another and a longer pause. Then the interrogator again inquired: "How can it be, sir, that you never saw one of them?" "Why," was the reply, "one of them was born after I left."

Adelaide at Ashland.

Mr. Foster, of Grayson county, has presented a bill to amend the homestead law. It does not propose to limit the extent or value of the homestead, but it ~~limits~~ it permits but one lot or parcel of land, that is, if a ~~city~~ homestead consisting of two or more lots, the lots shall be adjacent. The bill provides that with the consent of the wife the husband may mortgage the homestead. It also provides that the homestead shall be liable for all debts incurred for improvements, whether a ~~lien~~ has been given or not. Mr. Foster says that is the law now if mechanics often do not know what legal proceedings are necessary in such matters and they are frequently cheated out of what is due them. Under the provisions of his bill no such advantage can be taken of mechanics.

That portion of Governor Hubbard's message referring to our public school system does not meet with hearty approval of many members of the legislature. It is too much like a step backward.

It is generally conceded that the present session of the legislature will either amend or repeal the occupation and smoke-house taxes.

Bills have been reported in the senate to give criminals the right to testify in defense, to locate the higher courts at Austin (with minority report against it) and to reduce fees of assessors and collectors.

House bills provide for the reduction of fees of assessors and collectors, the regulation of railroad freights, and to give a binding force to contracts between employees and laborers.

The hall of the representatives was refused for the inaugural ball, because the building is believed unsafe. The ball will be the grandest of the kind ever held in the state.

The Family Newspaper.

In the seclusion and retirement of rural life, a good newspaper answers much the same purpose as a good spy-glass in viewing distant terrestrial objects, or as the telescope to the astronomer in bringing within reach of vision the far-off heavenly bodies; placing before the mental eye, in one group, the whole variety of animated nature. Here may be found the collective experience of hundreds of fellow-toilers, progress in arts and sciences, the news of the day, accounts of discussions, experiments, lectures, and discoveries, many miles away. In the family newspaper, too, the realities of the world are diversified by the softer hues of romance and the delicate sentiment of poetry.

American Cultivator.

HUNGER has driven many a man to crime, but more go to the lunch table.

John Wesley Hardin received thirty-nine lashes a few days since by order of the penitentiary commissioners.

Hardin seems to have been impressed with the idea that he was not an ordinary convict, as he had received such marked attention.

A LADY who did not know whether

her plantation was in Virginia or North Carolina, found, when the line was run, that she was a resident of Virginia.

"Well," said she, "I am glad I do not live in North Carolina, it was always

such a sickly place."

BOYHOOD is candid, and middle age,

though it may think the same things, is

refined. "What part," asked a Sunday school teacher, "of the burial of Sir John Moore do you like best?" He was thoughtful a moment, and then replied: "Few and short were the prayers we said."

SOME people think that by church

memberships they are pre-empting

homesteads in a land that is fairer than

this, but they will find that putting blank

envelopes in the contribution box on

Sunday will prove a serious drawback

to reading the titles clear.—*Home Sentinel*.

SAM recently got married, and told

his wife that she might retain all the

change which dropped on the floor out

of his pockets. What was his astonish-

ment, on Monday morning, to find no

money in his pants. He has since ascer-

tained that his wife hangs his pants up

sides down.

A PLAIN-SPOKEN woman recently vis-

ited a married woman, and said to her:

"How do you manage to amuse your-

self?" "Amuse," said the other, "don't

you know that I have my housework to

do?" "Yes," said the other, "I see that

you have it to do, but, as it is never done,

I concluded you must have some other

way of passing your time."

THE CYPRIAN DAMASCUS.

The City of Nicosia and its surroundings.

Our Cyprian Damascus is a labyrinth

of alleys, winding under minarets and

palms, in and out among an endless se-

ries of fountains, orange-trees and olive-

groves. Only a native of the town

could find his way from gate to mosque,

from coffee-house to bazaar, the engi-

neer, whose tents are pitched outside

the western gate—which might be

called King Richard's Gate—tells me

that he has a hard night to learn

his track from the gate outside to the

house inside the walls, so imaging how

the stranger or a criminal feels in such

a place! High walls render the streets

high walls render the streets

and fortifying the houses, the pierced

by archways here and there. These

openings lead into yards and gardens,

having a rude and far-away resemblance

to the courts of Sardis and Damascus.

Here, in truth, you find no marble pav-

ements, but to make up for the loss of

art, you have a more innocent nature,

peach-handsome Nicosia pales before

the same fruit of Nicosia. Some of the

doors are left open, permitting feminine

at the new numbers of the place,

as they dash past, booted and helmeted,

taking no notice of the dust and heat.

Nicosia has belonged to many lords in